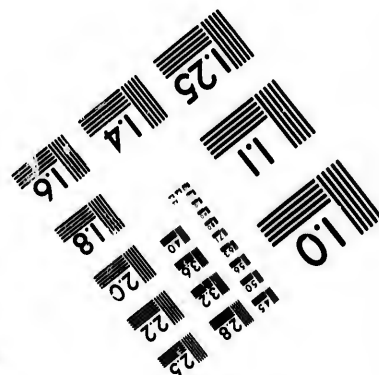
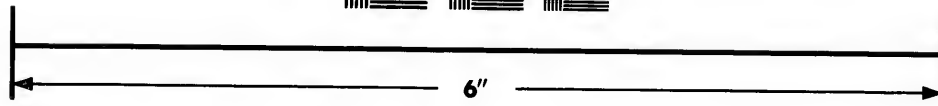
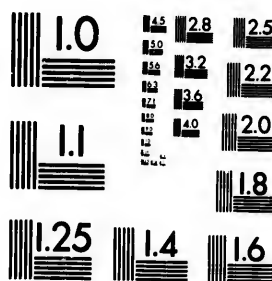


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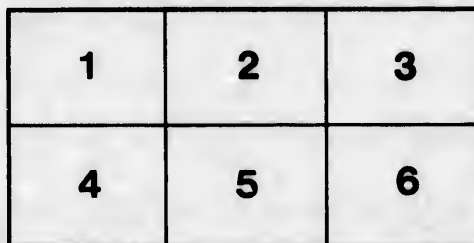
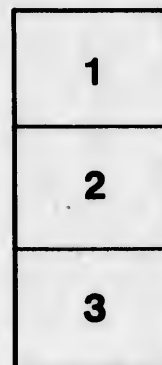
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THE
BUILDING AND ITS OBJECTS :
AN ESSAY.

READ,—JANUARY 10, 1850.

AT THE
FIRST PUBLIC MEETING
OF THE
SONS OF TEMPERANCE.

IN THE
NEW TEMPERANCE HALL,
POPLAR GROVE, HALIFAX.

~~~~~  
BY JOHN S. THOMPSON, ESQ.  
~~~~~

HALIFAX :
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THE BUILDING AND ITS OBJECTS.

THE first meeting of the Sons of Temperance, as an Order within the walls of Temperance Hall, may be considered as a partial dedication of the building, to the objects of that Institution.

In accordance with such dedicatory occasions, therefore, some thoughts on the Building, the Association, the anticipated Meetings, may be appropriate to the first paper read, at this first assemblage.

When a difficulty has been overcome,—when an object has been accomplished,—when a conquest has been achieved,—when impending clouds break up and clear off, and brightening prospects appear in the distance,—congratulation is natural and desirable. Congratulation may be indulged, therefore, at the present opportunity.

Frequently, in former years, were wishes expressed, respecting the erection of a Hall for Temperance and other moral and intellectual purposes. Wishes were frequent, but hope scarcely found a voice, in consequence of the numerous, and then apparently insurmountable, difficulties, which surrounded the object. Opposition and apathy and fear had to be contended with,—and unreasoning gloom, which men seemed enamoured of, had to be dispersed.

This, to a great extent has been accomplished. Difficulties have been climbed over, or gone around. The lions, of opposition,—and worse than these, the lions of coldness and doubt,—have been, to a great extent, combated and conquered. Gloom has, in part, been neutralized by triumph;—the object is nearly realized;—the desired Hall rises above us, in spacious proportions, and many gleams of sunshine mark the distant scenery.

Cause of some complacency and congratulation, exists in these results of faith and perseverance.

The mind naturally reverts, for a moment, to the old place; of location, in comparison with the new.

Public meetings were occasionally held in the Grafton Street Building,—but its situation was considered inconvenient, and its other occupancy precluded regularity. Refuge was repeatedly taken in Mason Hall, where, although courtesy from the proprietors was invariably experienced,—bacchanalian strains, frequently, mingled with the Temperance Hymn and Address;—audiences found themselves, on popular occasions, straitened for room,—and, for several reasons, felt that they were on foreign and unpropitious ground.—The small old Baptist Chapel, however, may be considered the *cradle* of Total Abstinence. There was rocked and nursed, the infant, which, we hope, is growing to gigantic proportions. The scene of that small and humble room, is present now, doubtless, to many minds, as it once was to the bodily sense; as it appeared on evenings of old,—with its large meeting of forty or fifty persons, with Beamish Murdoch sitting beneath the pulpit, and William M. Brown by his side, easy and cheerful as if they were merely doing the honours of their own fire sides.

That little building reminds, also, of some departed leaders, whose presence may not enhance our present meetings, but whose memories should not be altogether forgotten, in a review of the past: John McNeil, ever ready with humorous anecdote and serious appeal,—and John McDonald, with argument and exhortation—to support the important cause, under whose banners they stood.

Changes, however, pass over the scene, and Poplar Grove Hall, henceforward, may be considered the centre of Temperance operations.

Man exhibits the versatility and ambition of his nature, in his *building*, as in his other, contrivances. The Bee has its unvarying geometrical cell,—the Beaver and Ant and Mole, have their simple subterranean apartments,—the bird has its wind-rocked nest, without change, or variety, or ambition; without object, except as regards the obvious and instinctive requirements of refuge and shelter. Man, when he emerges from barbarism, rises above mere animal impulses, and makes efforts in accordance with his higher faculties.

The Wigwam and the Snow-hut, and the Tent of wandering tribes, are evidences of the mere refuge and shelter instincts. But as the dwelling rises in the scale of refinement, it acquires intellectual characteristics. The household

principles of cleanliness and comfort, are located under the family roof,—the niche for the book shelf,—the panel for the picture, are so many acknowledgements of the claims of knowledge and mental cultivation.

The dwelling house, the first and most requisite of the building class, is that which has most pathos in its history. It is sacred to the incidents of private life; to the unwritten, most deeply, interesting, chapters of earthly existence. It is the place of births and of deaths;—of cradles and sick couches;—of family hearths, and boards,—and all the heart-dear scenes of which these particulars are the centres.—The magic idea of *Home*, narrows its attractions, from Country to City, from *C* to Street,—from Street to House, and from House to Fire-side, with its Parental endearments, and protection.

Great skill and exquisite taste have been put in requisition, to embellish the dwelling homes of man. The Science, of Architect, Painter, Sculptor, and landscape Gardner, has been exhausted to make some of these and their appurtenances, as the bower and the garden of Eden. But in a variety of grades, down to the humblest of the decent abodes, many are the amiable devices, deserving of honour, to rise above the crude and unintellectual, and to attain somewhat of thoughtful refinement.

Another effort at intellectuality in buildings, is the Mausoleum, the splendid depositary or memorial of the honoured dead,—the endeavour at carrying affection and respect beyond the concerns of this life. Grand type of this class of buildings, stands the lofty Pyramid, on the banks of the Nile;—testifying, to distant ages, the veneration of nameless builders, to nameless departed;—remaining a mighty object amid the scenery, when the precise intent has been, for centuries, forgotten.

“ The Sun bids,
His evening farewell to the Pyramids,
As he hath done, age after age, till they,
Alone on Earth, seem ancient as his ray;
While their great shadows, stretching from the light,
Look like the first colossal steps of night,
Moving across the valley, to invade,
The distant hills of porphyry with their shade.”

The Temple, the edifice dedicated to the worship of a Supreme Being, may be considered as the most magnificent and exalted, of the buildings of Earth. Sometimes

this assumes the elegant right lines, and circular curves, the entablatures, pedestals, pediments, columns, and capitals, of Grecian or Roman Style,—captivating the sense by harmony and proportion of parts,—by beauty of particulars,—and by elegantly expansive general effects.—Sometimes the Gothic form rises in more sombre majesty ;—combining numerous vertical, and upward sweeping lines,—lightness of form and embellishment,—great height, cloistered galleries, and painted windows,—so as to elevate the mind ; to give magnificent results, grand and noble effects, with least expression of encumbrance and weight ;—presenting a junction of the solemn, the vast, the airy, the obscure, the mystic,—in an approach to the perfection of sacred architecture.

The Poet, having gone through a charmed round, of the haunts of Solemn Musing,—pays special respect to the scenery of the Gothic edifice :

“ But let my due feet never fail,
To walk the studious cloisters, pale :
And love, the high, embowed, roof,—
With antique pillars,—massy proof,—
And storied windows, richly dight,—
Casting a dim, religious, light.
There let the pealing organ blow,—
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Exalt me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.”

Another mode and application of building, exhibits man's endeavour, in this department, to rise above mere instinctive requirements. He desires to congregate, within shelter, for purposes of amusement, instruction, or display,—and the Amphitheatre, or Hall, more or less elaborate, is the result. Representatives of this class of architectural constructions were numerous, in the old luxurious States of Europe. As chief of these shrines to excitement, and what is called, recreation,—the mind reverts to the great Amphitheatre of ancient Italy, the Colosseum.

“ Its arches on arches” in all the pomp of Colossal architecture,—its marble and other seats, tier above tier,—spacious enough to accomodate a city as spectators,—its subterranean vaults for wild and ferocious animals,—its great arena,—its many architectural and mechanical

contrivances,—all proved the vast means lavished on the entertainment of a people,—and the mode of entertainment appears in dark contrast with the institutions of better times. Its arrangements constituted a splendid instance of degradation and wrong doing. The throned despot,—the haughty and yet crouching ranks which composed the multitudinous assemblage,—the cruel and debasing exhibitions of the arena,—formed a monstrous combination, disgraceful to humanity,—outrageous to reason, ripe for overthrow, - and eloquently appealing to the Goths,—for visitation and redress.

Christianity abolished the barbarities of that circus,—but, the ancient theatre, became established, insidiously,—appearing in many instances, a school of immorality,—in which works, combining wit and wickedness, were represented, and licentious conduct was tolerated, with debauching effect. In this department, also, reforms proceeded, and taste changed ;—the theatre itself improved, and, by degrees, the lecture hall and the reading room, successfully rivalled the scenes of more imaginative recreation.

It remained for some approximation to the "Good Time Coming," to plan and realize such buildings as that in which we are now assembled. Buildings kept free from the old objections,—and devoted to knowledge and virtue.

The Order, under whose charge the present meeting has been arranged, expects to have much interest in the Building.

The objects of that Order, are,—Temperance, Christian Sympathy, and general Morality.

A solemn pledge,—careful guardianship,—and appropriate rules and organization,—are provided, as aids to faithfulness, respecting the virtue whose name the Institution bears.

Fraternal arrangements mark its proceedings.

Acts of Brotherly kindness,—and pecuniary benefit, tend to alleviate the privations of sickness, the gloom of departing scenes.

The members' meetings are protected from intrusion,—are governed by parliamentary usages,—and, having important business matters, as subjects of discussion and decision, are admirably calculated to become schools of deliberation,—tending, variously, to habits of regularity, and to private and public usefulness.

Besides occupation of this spacious Hall, for special public occasions, the Sons of Temperance expect to hold one of the fine rooms of the basement, for Divisional, or regular, weekly meetings. If these meetings be arranged in succession, as at present, and be held in the one place, the room will be occupied about 300 evenings out of the 365, of each year : an amount of profitable and pleasing employment, which under usually favourable circumstances, may be expected to have extensive, excellent results.

The expectation also is, to be able to engage the other large room of the basement, for the purposes of a Sons of Temperance Literary Institution. A place for the collection and perusal, of books of reference, and periodicals ;—for the gathering of pictorial and other illustrations, of Art, Science, and Natural History, —and for stated conversational meetings, at which particulars in the departments mentioned, would become subjects of enquiry and elucidation.

But not only is the building to be a kind of home, and centre, and rallying place, for the Sons of Temperance, and other Temperance institutions,—we hope that it will become, to some extent, a school of Science,—of the Fine and useful Arts,—of Useful Knowledge, generally.

With more advanced times, and better opportunities,—such occupation of the Building would be reasonable and probable.

Let this Hall be completed, in a style of simple elegance,—let its interior arrangements be in accordance with the proportions which its walls include,—and professional expounders of the different departments of human learning, may be expected to make frequent sojourn here.—Beside Institutional efforts, now existing, and worthy of grateful cultivation and sustainment,—the Philosopher and Scholar, and Artist, may often take advantage of the capabilities of the Hall, to address the large occasional assemblage, made up of all classes of the community.

Thus,—on future evenings, may audiences meet here, for the purpose of studying the wonders of the Starry Heavens,—of pondering on the instructive recitals of History, of listening to the elevating strains of Music, of viewing specimens of Scenic Art,—of witnessing the delineations of the Elocutionist,—and the efforts of many other practitioners in the paths of Moral and Intellectual advancement.

The anticipation is cheering ; this dedication of the long desired Hall, abounds in bright prospects, whose consummation seems reasonable.

The youthful Hannibal, we are told, was brought to the altar, and was directed to vow unremitting hostility to the national adversaries. We live in wiser times, as regards conflict of sword and spear,—but there are adversaries, Ignorance and Vice, against which the vow may be, frequently, recorded here,—and the warfare prosecuted.

Society is still far from moral perfection,—and, intellectually, an obscuring haze, if not thick darkness, rests, for many minds, on many objects.

Originally, respecting Physical light, the fiat was. "Let there be light,---and there was light ;"---but in intellectual concerns the economy is, to make illumination depend on patient exertion, and deep interest, and humble faith.

With these, the path is direct, and the progress sure, and the experience will be, according to the motto on one of our Banners "Brighter and Brighter."

By means of the verbal and experimental elucidation, customary to Halls of Science, as this in part may be expected to become, the way to many matters, seeming difficult, becomes smooth and plain.

Columbus puzzled the Spanish Grandees, by his problem, of causing an egg to stand vertically, on the surface of a mirror. But when he broke the tip of the shell, the puzzle was solved ;---and the lesson was taught, that difficult matters become comparatively easy, when explained by the initiated. So it is with many of the intricacies of learning.

And how great the dominion, which may be thus gained ; by faith and patience.

At one time, Britain sought aid from the swords and shields of foreign adventurers, while an island, west of Germany, formed her scarcely known domain. But Britain believed in success, and endeavoured after it, and now her empire has twice the capaciousness of all Europe. We are her subjects, or her children, let us aim at appropriate and worthy, empire, of mind.

"The world is full of poetry,—the air
Is living with its spirit;—and the waves
Move to the music of its melodies,—
And sparkle in its brightness;—Earth is veiled,
And mantled with its beauty,—and the walls,
That close the universe, with crystal, in,
Are eloquent with voices, that proclaim
The unseen glories of immensity."

The prizes in the path of encresing light are valuable for their own sake, and for the secondary rewards which result.

Socrates, and some companions, suffered shipwreck.-- The useful learning which he had acquired, soon caused popularity and profitable employment, in the foreign land, on whose shores they were cast. He was enabled to help his more dependent countrymen, and to aid them in returning home, while he remained among the friendly strangers. His late companions in adversity, and the sharers of his improved fortunes, inquired, what message they should bear from him to his native city. Tell them, said he, to give their children, those riches, which will swim ashore with them, from shipwreck.

Yes, the imperial treasures,—are those of the mind; they accompany the man in every vicissitude, he cannot be deprived of them, by accident or enemy.

Without these, no matter what the worldly possessions, he is poor;—with these, including the consolations of religion, he is rich, whatever else be taken away.

Congratulations, then, for several causes, are appropriate, at this dedicatory meeting.

The long desired Hall exists,—the Sons of Temperance hold their first Monthly Meeting within its walls, and the prospect, respecting aid to virtue and general intelligence, is animating.

The feeling is that of one, standing on a glade newly won from the wilderness. Something, perhaps much, has been achieved, but much more is hoped for,—and he looks below and beyond the mossy turf, and sees, in anticipation, the future fruitful field and blooming garden, of the heritage.

In olden times, when a place of refuge and defence was required, the castle was reared on the beetling cliff. It

rose, majestically, above the crags and trees of the mountain's brow,—while, far below, could be heard, the brawling of the torrent in the dark ravine. The building became an ornament in the landscape, and a strong hold of the land. Useful and majestic in youth, it wins richness of tint, and grace of outline, from time,—and ivy and wall-flowers, harmonise with its battlements, as well as the flag and the warder's figure, of earlier days.

A refuge and defence and means of progress, as regards moral and intellectual lands,—may this building be. Its usefulness has commenced, its antiquity is to come;—may its history be one of honour and profit to the city, to the province. May it tend to varied enlightenment and virtue,—and be, to some extent, an auxiliary to the "Houses not built by hands"—which flourish in perennial strength and beauty.